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"The People's Store."

OUR TARIFF SYSTEM;

SOME OF ITS FEATURES.

By B. W. ARNOLD, LYNCHBURG, VA.

Editor of The Times-Dispatch:

Sir—Few things are more formidable to the average reader of newspapers than a lengthy discussion of the tariff. The subject is a hackneyed one; the method of treatment is generally biased, and the meaningless terms of "differential," "compensatory," "specific" and "ad-valorem" rates are, to say the least, uninteresting. With the exception of the business men having control of particular industries affected by the tariff duties, and the leading politicians who shape public opinion in approaching campaigns, few comparatively read so much as a line of a tariff law, much less undertake the more disagreeable employment of tediously studying the bill itself. The endless multiplication of duties on all grades and qualities of material used in numerous branches of industry, expressed in technical language as unintelligible as a foreign tongue, confuses the mind and renders impossible a clear understanding of the matter. Yet the theoretical and practical working of a tariff duty is easily enough seen.

An artificial element of cost, over and above the natural elements of cost; but both alike, of course, have to be covered in the selling price. The importer advances the tax in the first instance, but only to be collected later from the American citizen who buys the imported product for his own use. Thus it is seen that a tariff is an indirect tax on our own people, and cannot possibly be regarded as a tribute forced from other nations selling us goods.

There are two kinds of tariff: A revenue tariff and a protective tariff. The first is laid to raise money from our citizens for the existence of the necessary expenses of the government; the second is laid to increase in our own markets the selling prices of certain imported articles to such an extent that it will prove profitable for citizens of our country to undertake to produce them. The sole justification for the existence of the latter must be found in the necessity of giving encouragement at first to a young industry, which promises in time to become self-supporting, but whose rise in the beginning is prevented by accidental or artificial causes, such as special machinery required, a particular order of skilled labor demanded, changes made from the regular channels of production to new and different ones, etc. Little com-

plaint has ever been made about our revenue tariffs; but there has been no end of controversy concerning protective duties. The long list of dutiable articles in the McKinley, Wilson and Dingley bills, including cotton, iron, wool, chemicals, oils, glass, earthenware, paper, silk, tobacco, wood, metals and numberless sundries unenumerated, would make it appear that the United States is never to attain that independent stage in its development when its manufacturing classes can produce anything of themselves; but that its industries must needs have, as infants, continued nourishment from the treasury of the government. Since the support of the protective industries is derived from the whole people and is a tax on all for the benefit of a few, it is natural that demand should be constantly made for the reason of the creation, continuance and increase of numerous duties.

Many pleas, other than that of infant industries, will be found to have been offered in vindication of our long history of tariff legislation. In brief, that history has been as follows: Previous to 1816 only tariffs for revenue; in this year the system of protective legislation was begun, and was maintained until 1842, though no high duties were laid until 1824. Steady increase followed from this last date until, in 1832, the imports had reached the high figure of an average rate of 38 per cent; a gradual reduction of 1-10 per cent in every six months was then effected by the Compromise Act of 1832, which was to continue until 1842; at which time the uniform rate of 20 per cent was reached on all articles. The next four years witnessed the strong application of protection against imports in an era of very high duties began, which was followed in 1857 by still further reductions, making the fourteen years preceding the Civil War approximate closely an interval of free trade. In 1861, however, the rates of 1849 were restored, with higher duties still on certain imports, and in the years 1882-84 the average rate was increased to the high figures of 37 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively. These excessive tariffs continued until 1892, when, by reason of the surplus revenue in the United States treasury, a horizontal reduction of 10 per cent on all imports was gained. In 1895, however, this law being repealed, the same high duties were restored, and these form the basis of our present system. The McKinley bill of 1890, and the Dingley bill of 1897 have fully effected all reforms made by the laws of 1883 and 1894.

That the tariffs before 1898 were laid for revenue rather than for protection is revealed by the fact that exportation, commerce and agriculture formed the business interests of this country at that time, and not manufacturing. For several years these occupations had proved more profitable than the establishment of manufactures, by reason of the French and English wars, which had sustained at a high figure the prices on all agricultural products. At least twenty years after the Revolutionary War, the fathers of our republic had not realized the importance of manufacturing, and the taxes they imposed were mainly for the strengthening of the newly founded government, and not for the nourishment of infant factories.

The early growth of American manufactures took place in the restrictive period of seven years following 1808, when the Berlin and Milan decrees of Napoleon, the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809, the War of 1812 and the Embargo Act of Jefferson, imposed such unusual limitations upon the world's trade and commerce. In these years we had to live within ourselves, and numerous manufactures springing up found solid footing in supplying the home market. The iron, cot-

ton and woolen industries were practically on a firm basis before the system of protective tariff was introduced. The mild protection afforded for two or three years after the restrictive period was advocated and gained by Clay and Calhoun on the ground of our being, as a nation, better prepared to fight the enemy in the emergency of another war, and not with a purpose of favoring domestic manufactures. The argument, that early development of "infant industries," when drawn from the history of the United States, is not sound.

Three causes contributed at this time to the depression of agricultural prices, viz., England's unusually fine harvests, her restrictive laws of commerce, and the financial panic and currency bubble of 1837. For a time, at least, these causes made it appear that manufacturing would prove more profitable than farming; and at once the manufacturers began to receive more encouragement from the government, since it was also seen that foreign countries would not be purchasers of our manufactured goods, having better products of their own; the popular cry was soon raised to preserve the home market for the benefit of domestic industries. The New England States demanded high duties on woolen goods and sundry manufactures, while the Middle and Western States, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky clamored vigorously for their agricultural products. Only the Southern States, that had to buy so much for their slaves, and that feared England might retaliate by heavily taxing the importation of cotton, opposed the restrictive policy. Protection was steadily gaining ground, and shortly was enacted in rapid succession the high tariff laws of 1824, 1828 and 1832. The political speech-making in the presidential elections of these years greatly influenced the public mind to support protective tariffs, as the leaders of the different parties—Adams, Clay, Crawford and Jackson—were advocates of the system, and made a point of posing as "favoring domestic industries." The New England States, passed by the National Republicans, the average duty on all articles was as high as 50 per cent.

Reaction, however, soon came. No real benefit had come to the home market. States from an export trade, and were unwilling their competitors in foreign markets. The Middle and Western States, therefore, shortly withdrew their support of high protective duties. A considerable loss was sustained in ship-building and commercial enterprises by reason of the policy of a restricted trade, the tariff movement lost some ground also in the North and East. In the tariff opposition conflict, strong and bitter, which began a period of steady reduction of tariffs, ending with almost "free trade" in 1857. The twenty-four year period of reduction was the Whigs, only by the high tariff of 1842, which was repeated four years later. The new plea offered for its justification was the weak "wages argument," that it was necessary for American manufacturers to receive the laborer's better distance because they paid laborers better wages than their competitors did in foreign countries. The sentiment for protection was waning; and the plan of establishing this restrictive policy as a permanent system, to continue in time of peace and in the normal conditions of trade and industry, had evidently been abandoned altogether.

Immediately after this period, however, came the Civil War, and the exigencies of the government in this trying emergency made possible the high tariff laws

of the sixties. The financial legislation of the government at this time happened also to be in the hands of men with strong protectionist views, such as Morrill and Stevens, and nearly every producer, who laid his claims before Congress, got all the protection he dared to ask.

Moreover, internal duties were imposed on many articles, and in order to offset these, and equalize competition from abroad, equal tariffs were collected on like imports. The universal rule seemed to be to tax every article indifferently, and as high as possible. Duties were placed that palpably levied taxes of 50, 60 and 100 per cent.

These burdensome laws were war measures, and were to be removed, it was generally supposed, as soon as peace should be restored. Such has not been the case, however; on the contrary, the tariffs have multiplied and increased, and have grown rich on government factors, there began a fight for protection as a permanent benefit. The system, supported by wealth and able leadership, was inserted as a strong plank in the platform of the political party in power, and it was shown that various policies would fall the United States treasury pay pensions, punish rebels and strengthen the foundations of the Union. Internal taxes were removed, while the custom duties, at first imposed only in order to offset the internal taxes, were sustained in interest and domestic producers. "Ad valorem rates" were substituted for "specific" in some cases for the direct purpose of hiding the amount of protection given, and in the introduction of the "comensatory duty"—a tax placed on the manufactured article to cover one already laid on the raw materials of which the article is made—also opportunity for excessive tariffs was also afforded. "The history of our existing tariff," writes F. W. Taussig, in his "Tariff History of the United States" (an authority on this question), is simply a history of the way in which the war duties were obtained, increased and systematized, and of the half-hearted and unsuccessful attempts at reduction and reform which have been made from time to time.

Under Cleveland's administration continued an earnest effort at reform, succeeded in removing some of the most obnoxious features of our tariff laws; but the Wilson-Gorman bill of 1894 was by no means a "free trade" measure, nor at all satisfactory to the advocates of a revenue tariff. High duties were retained on metals, many chemicals and the leading articles of textile manufacture. The two fundamental and characteristic principles of the tariff bill of 1894 was that of relieving of material of manufactures from duties, and that of substituting simple duties, according to value, for those levied by the pound or square yard, were practically put our tariff system back on its old basis.

Just before McKinley's second election, General Charles H. Grosvenor, member of Congress from Ohio, while visiting in London and discussing the approaching presidential campaign, stated his view of the position of the Republican party on the tariff question as follows: "Republicans will enter the congressional and presidential campaigns standing steadfastly for protection. They cheerfully father the Dingley bill, re-enact the McKinley law of 1890 and expect that the country in 1902 and 1904 will rally overwhelmingly to the idea of uncompromising protection."

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| Codfish, pound..... 5c | Duff's Malt Whiskey, bottle..... 80c |
| Blackeye Peas, quart..... 7c | N. C. Corn Whiskey, gallon..... \$2.00 |
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| Quaker Oats, package..... 10c | |

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tracy, in outlining his policy, declared himself in favor of the "abolition of tariffs on foreign goods as are no longer needed for revenue, if such abolition can be had without harm to our industries and labor." To Governor A. B. Cummings, of Iowa, is attributed the following welcomed statement recently made: "The Republicans of my State believe the time has come for certain changes in the tariff. . . . We know that there are monopolies that could not stand for a minute if there were nothing but legitimate protection in the Dingley law." At present, tariff reform promises to be the main issue in the next presidential election, and on this question the Democrats stand on solid ground. Hon. John W. Daniel declares "a new book and a fresh page is open for Democracy; new duties, new responsibilities confront the party. On the first page write tariff reform—the most vital issue before the American people." Ex-President Cleveland is positive and clear in his position, "revision of the tariff is now, and will be, until equitably settled, the paramount issue in American politics."

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<p>Second Floor</p> <p>can give you Ready-to-Wear Goods at less than cost of material.</p> <p>Ladies' Outing Cloth Skirts, good quality, with deep ruffle, at..... 29c</p> <p>Ladies' Skirts, nicely made, deep ruffle, trimmed with bands of solid color, neatly embroidered, at..... 75c</p> <p>Ladies' Outing Cloth Gowns, made full yokes, finished with beading; not 8c, but..... 48c</p> <p>Ladies' Outing Cloth Gowns, different style yokes, extra full; 8c value..... 79c</p>	<p>Two Jacket</p> <p>"bargains that speak for themselves. See them.</p> <p>Ladies' Loose Back Jacket, with belt, made in nice quality cloth of covert, for..... \$7.98</p> <p>A Covert Coat, three-quarter length, satin lined..... \$9.98</p>	<p>Waist Bargains.</p> <p>Flannel Waist, with fancy shaped yokes, for..... \$2.19</p> <p>Velvet and Plaid Silk Waist, with large, new sleeves; a special..... \$4.98</p>
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